

- Last week we looked at the events surrounding the birth of Jesus. We noted the reason for differences in Luke's genealogy of Jesus ([Luke 3:23-38](#)) and the genealogy which Matthew gives ([Matthew 1:1-17](#)). Matthew recounts an angel visiting Joseph, Jesus's father, and tells him to go forward with the marriage because the pregnancy was caused by God ([Matthew 1:18-25](#)) while Luke tells of the angel Gabriel visiting Jesus' mother Mary and telling her that she would have a child of God even though she had never had sexual intercourse, because "nothing is impossible with God." ([Luke 1:26-38](#)) We noted that Mary went to stay with her relative Elizabeth for three months while Elizabeth was pregnant too. ([Luke 1:39-56](#)) Even though they are old, Elizabeth and Zacharias still have a son they name John (who will become "John the Baptist"). ([Luke 1:57-80](#)) When Jesus is finally born, a star appears and some wise persons correctly interpret the star to mean the Christ has been born so they take gifts and go to Jerusalem to look for him so they ask the current Roman puppet ruler there named Herod. Herod perceives this as a threat and so he tells them to return after worshiping and tell him where Jesus is. They find Jesus and give Him gifts but an angel tells them not to back to go back to Herod so they don't. ([Matthew 2:1-12](#)) realizes that the magi have not returned so he orders all males under two years old in Bethlehem and round about to be killed. When King Herod finally dies and his son Archaleus takes over, God tells Joseph in a dream that it is safe to go back to Galilee, where they are from. ([Matthew 2:13-23](#)) Jesus continues to grow and become strong there. ([Luke 2:39-40](#)) We don't read a lot about Jesus' early adulthood, but we know that when he was 12 he dazzled very educated Jewish men in the temple with His wisdom. ([Matthew 2:41-52](#)).
- This week we will be studying events around the beginning of Jesus's ministry, including the work and teaching of John the Baptist and how he prepared the way for Jesus. We will conclude by looking at some events that happened at the very outset of Christ's ministry. Remember that there is one Gospel and four Gospel accounts. We are currently looking at events recorded by what we call the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, who all tell similar events and arrange them in chronological order. Almost all the events we are going to look at today are recorded by all three of them.
- John the Baptist begins preaching and baptizing people to make the way ready for Christ, just like the prophet Isaiah said ([Isaiah 40:3](#)) He wears a garment made of camel hair and eats locusts and wild honey. Although he is in a remote location his fame spreads to the point that even Jewish religious leaders come to be baptized by him – John rebukes them and tells them Christ's baptism will be much more meaningful. ([Matthew 3:1-12](#), [Mark 1:2-8](#), [Luke 3:1-20](#))
- Jesus ends up settling down in the region known as Galilee, again fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah ([Isaiah 9:1](#)), specifically in a town called Capernaum. ([Matthew 4:12-17](#), [Mark 1:14-15](#)).
- Jesus goes to John the Baptist to be baptized by him also. John recognizes Jesus, tells everyone that Jesus is who he has been talking about. John is reticent to baptize Christ

because he feels He is not worthy, but Jesus insists. When Jesus comes out of the water, a dove descends from heaven onto Jesus and God's voice says, "This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:3-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 4:1-13).

- Jesus is led by the Spirit specifically to be tempted by Satan. After Christ fasts 40 days, he was tempted three times by Satan. Each time, Christ answers Satan directly with scripture. (Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13)
- Christ goes back to his hometown in Nazareth, and goes into the synagogue and explains how prophecies are in the process of being fulfilled. He is not accepted there and He notes that it not uncommon for prophets not to be accepted in their hometown and cites Elijah and Elisha as examples. (Matthew 13:54-58, Mark 6:1-6, Luke 4:14-30)
- Christ starts his ministry by going through the land preaching and healing. Jesus often stays in the house of Simon Peter in Capernaum. It is not clear now Jesus knew them, but he is there. One incident recorded for us is the fact that he casts a demon out of Peter's mother-in-law. It is worth noting that Peter was not celibate as many Catholics who call him the first pope claim. Soon after this incident, Jesus is walking along by the Sea of Galilee. Commercial fishing was a common occupation in that area and Jesus was probably going to see Simon Peter, his brother Andrew and their operation. By now Jesus is already drawing a crowd wherever he goes, and he continues to preach and heal. Jesus also sees two sets of brothers, not just Simon Peter and Andrews, but James and John (who were the sons of a person named Zebedee). He calls them all to follow Him, and they drop what they are doing and follow Jesus. (Matthew 4: 8-25, Matthew 8:14-17, Mark 1:16-39, Luke 4:31 – 5:11).
- In a curious incident, Jesus heals a leper. Leprosy is a very serious skin condition which is curable today but back then wasn't and was contagious, so lepers were generally separated into a leper colony. What makes this event curious is that Jesus tells him not to tell people but to go right to the priest. Jesus heals so that people will know, in fact he commands us to do good work so that people can see (Matthew 5:19). But in doing this, Jesus is advising the man healed to follow the law which commands showing yourself to a priest who can certify one "healed of leprosy" before that person can be readmitted to society. (Leviticus 14:1-14). Of course, the man tells everyone anyway. (Matthew 8:2-4, Mark 1:40-45, Luke 5:12-16)
- Jesus is teaching at a house (maybe Peter's) in Capernaum and there is a paralyzed man who wants to be healed. So, four of his friends carry him on his mat through the streets of Capernaum, take the steps up to the roof of the house, bust a hole in the roof big enough to let a man down through, then lower him down through it. Jesus uses this as a teaching moment, and first says his sins are forgiven. When challenged by the religious leaders, Jesus heals the man in front of all of them to prove He has the authority to forgive sins. (Matthew 9:2-8, Mark 2:1-12, Luke 5:17-26).
- Jesus sees Matthew collecting taxes and instructs Matthew to follow him. He is the fifth disciple we read about called specifically by Jesus. (Matthew 9:9, Mark 2:13-14, Luke 5:27-28).

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Matthew 3-4:25; 8:2-4 and 9:2-17, 13:54-58

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- Jesus goes to have a feast with Matthew at his house. A lot of other tax collectors and famous sinners are eating with Him. The religious leaders are concerned, so he tells them that He has come to heal those in need of it, not the self-righteous who pretend not to need it. He also tells them that his disciples should not fast while he is here, but will after he is gone. (Matthew 9:10-17, Mark 2:15-22, Luke 5:29-39).
- Notice that Jesus assumes that those who follow Him will fast. We are not commanded to fast, but reading between the lines, it is obvious we should. (Matthew 6:16-18)

#### Questions

1. What does the term "Synoptic Gospels" mean?
2. What are the "Synoptic Gospels."
3. How many Gospels are there? How many Gospel accounts?
4. What prophet did John's ministry fulfill?
5. What did John the Baptist wear?
6. What did John the Baptist eat?
7. How did John the Baptist rebuke the Jewish religious leaders who came to be baptized?
8. Where did Jesus settle? Which prophet's prophecy does this fulfill?
9. What does John the Baptist do when Christ goes to be baptized by him?
10. What happens after Christ is baptized?
11. What does Christ do before he is tempted by Satan?
12. How many times does Satan tempt Christ?
13. How does Christ respond each time he is tempted?
14. What does Christ say when he is rejected in Nazareth? To which prophets does he compare himself in that sense?
15. Where does Jesus stay often when he is in Capernaum?
16. From whose mother-in-law does Jesus cast a demon?
17. Who are the first four people Jesus calls? What is their relationship to each other?
18. What is the occupation of the first four people Jesus calls?
19. What is leprosy?
20. What is curious about the man Jesus heals of leprosy?
21. What do the four friends do for the paralytic in Capernaum?
22. What does Jesus say to the religious leaders that he will exhibit while he heals the paralytic in Capernaum?
23. Who is fifth apostle Jesus calls? What is His profession?
24. What lessons can we learn from Jesus at Matthew's feast?
25. How do we know we should fast?

Originally developed by Madison Laird for high school study at the East Foothill Church of Christ in San Jose, CA following a curriculum outline by Aaron Curtis. Edited by Betty Brown of Jackson, TN. Material may be used free of charge without license or royalty. Questions or comments: madison@madisonlaird.com